

Do we need one person in charge or not when it comes to the executive functions of the county government, much like a President, a Governor and/or a Mayor or Burgess, or do you want five people in charge? That's the question. It's that simple. That is the major question and the first hurdle you have to get over when you decide if you are for or against Charter Government. That is what Charter Government is and that one person in charge is called a County Executive.

Right now all the executive and legislative powers and responsibilities are shared equally among the five county commissioners. With Charter Government the legislative powers would be assumed by a county council much like a congress, a state legislature, or a town council. All of our 12 municipalities in Frederick County have the charter form of government already, lead by a Mayor or Burgess performing the executive function and Town Councils, Town Commissions or a Board of Aldermen performing the legislative function. It has been about 20 years since the last time we had the debate about Charter Government and the voters had the opportunity to cast their votes on whether or not they wanted to change to Charter Government for Frederick County's future. Now for the record, the voters have said, "No," four different times when the question was been placed on the ballot; twice for Charter Government (1970 and 1991) and twice for Code Home Rule (1968 and 2002).

So, what has changed in the twenty years since the last time the voters said, "No," to Charter Government on the ballot? In my opinion, Frederick County is at a crossroads and we need one person in charge with a defined vision for the future whether I/we like the vision or not. We need to know what our plan is for our infrastructure whether it is school construction, roads, water and sewer, waste to energy, and/or other major capital projects. Also the buck stops with one person regarding whether or not the county government is operating effectively and efficiently. That person would be the County Executive.

Right now we are lucky that we have a clear majority of Commissioners on the Board who are in agreement on the direction for the county. But that has not always been the case and at times the County Commission has operated like a five-headed monster with no clear direction. At election time, when casting your vote for commissioner, you pick the issues that are important to you and figure out which candidates stand the way you want on those issues. Then you pick a majority of candidates and try to pick and

vote for a good Board of Commissioners. There are those people who single shot (vote for only one candidate) and that is great for the ego but means nothing to the candidate who sits without a majority on the Board.

While the Charter Writing Board works through the process of deciding what to include and exclude in the Charter, contact them to let them know whether or not you want a strong executive or a weak one. You can reach them by e-mail at [charterboard@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:charterboard@FrederickCountyMD.gov) and/or visit the website at <http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?NID=4490> to learn more about what type of Charters can be adopted. For instance you can have an elected County Executive or you can have an appointed County Executive, appointed by the elected County Council. This is just one example of the different type of Charters that can be written.

I would also like to say a few words about holding a special election to choose members for the Charter Writing Board. Yes, it is their right under the State Constitution if they can get 2,000 signatures on the petition. But before you sign the petition to hold a special election, ask yourself several questions. First, do you have a major problem with the majority of the current Charter Writing Board? What are those differences and do the people on the petition satisfy those differences? Are you for or against Charter Government? Because if the required 2,000 signatures are gathered, and a special election is held, it will cost Frederick County citizens at least \$250,000 to hold that special election. A quarter of a million dollars is a lot of money, especially during these tough economic times. If you are against Charter Government, don't sign the petition. You can just wait until the Presidential Election in 2012 and vote against Charter Government for FREE. Let the debate begin, free of charge. We don't have money to waste.

Below is a list of those people who are currently serving on the Charter Writing Board and some professional background information:

**Fred Anderson**, Frederick County Sheriff's Office – Public Safety  
**Joan Aquilino-McIntire** – Business/Political/Government/Civil Servant  
**Debra Borden**, Attorney – Government/Civil Servant/Municipal/Legal  
**Dr. Tom Browning**, Farm Bureau – Government/Civil Servant/Agriculture  
**Ken Coffey**, Frederick Memorial Hospital – Government/Civil Servant/Non-Profits/Medical – Mr. Coffey was an alternate member of the 1991 Frederick County Charter Board.

**Jeff Holtzinger**, Former Mayor, City of Frederick, Engineer and Attorney – Government/Civil Servant/Municipal/Legal

**James Hoover**, Mayor of Emmitsburg – Government/Civil Servant/Municipal/Transportation

**Bob Kresslein**, Attorney, former Chair, Frederick County Democratic Central Committee – Political/Community Activist/Legal/Non-Profits – Mr. Kresslein was a member of the 1991 Frederick County Charter Board.

**Rocky Mackintosh** – Business/Community Activist

alternates

Doug Browning

Dana French

Earl Robbins

Their next meeting is Tuesday, May 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the third floor meeting room of Winchester Hall or you can watch it on Frederick County Cable Channel 19.

Commissioner Blaine R. Young

April 20, 2011